10 award-winning early learning apps compared, ages 2 to 8

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Lingokids, KidloLand, ABCmouse, PBS KIDS Games and six more award winners for young children: what each does, what it costs, who sees the data and the catch.

Ten apps for children aged 2 to 8 have won awards such as NAPPA, Mom's Choice, Kidscreen and the Webbys between 2021 and 2026, and most of them are the same thing: a big library of short games and songs that a parent pays for each month. This list gives each one's kind, what a child does, the price where one is public, and the catch. It comes from our study of 949 award wins. We could not install or watch any of them, so every description of a screen is secondhand, from Common Sense Media, store pages and reviews. Prices differ between sources.

1. Lingokids (ages 2 to 8). Games, short shows, songs and a podcast, mostly English with some Spanish and Portuguese. A NAPPA winner in 2023 and 2024 and a Mom's Choice Gold in 2025. Price: free download with a 7-day trial, then a subscription that Common Sense says can get pricey, with complaints about trial billing. Catch: a child swipes a large menu with little guidance, and parent progress data is basic.

2. KidloLand (ages 1 to 7). More than 50 apps bundled: puzzles, tracing, songs, rhymes, a parental lock. Many NAPPA wins across its sibling apps. Price: a free tier plus about $99.99 a year. Catch: not adaptive, and the "ad-free" and safety claims are the company's own.

3. ABCmouse (ages 2 to 8). 850-plus lessons in ten levels, a step-by-step path, and tickets spent on avatar clothes, pets and a room. Price: reported between $9.99 and $12.99 a month; a card is needed for the trial and Common Sense reports cancellation complaints. Catch: the screen is busy, and some features, such as the assessment, cost extra.

4. PBS KIDS Games (ages 3 and up). Short games sorted by show, with characters from Daniel Tiger, Wild Kratts and Arthur. A Webby winner in 2023 and a Kidscreen winner in 2025. Price: free, with no purchases, and no sign-in that we found. Catch: games are not adaptive, and its privacy rating on Common Sense was in conflict with PBS's own policy, which we could not settle.

5. HOMER Learn & Grow (ages 2 to 8). A path personalised by interests and level, covering reading, math and feelings, and it works offline. NAPPA and Mom's Choice winner in 2021. Catch: plans cost roughly $8 to $13 a month in sources that disagree, and reviews report crashes.

6. Sago Mini School (ages 2 to 5). A calm, ad-free subscription app that won NAPPA in 2021 and Kidscreen's best learning app in 2026. Catch: a reviewer says "school" oversells how

deep it goes.

7. Creta Class (ages 3 to 8). A daily 15-minute narrated math lesson that unlocks on weekdays, with a parent report for each lesson. A Mom's Choice Gold and Academics' Choice winner in 2022. Price: a free demo, then about $14.99 a month. Catch: the AI personalisation is claimed on its site, and the outcome claims we found are parents' comments.

8. Skybrary (ages 2 to 9). From Reading Rainbow's owner: an e-library of more than 1,000 books with video field trips, about 100 free. NAPPA winner in 2026. Catch: Common Sense warns that the library sits behind a fee.

9. PAW Patrol Academy (ages 2 to 5). A licensed-character preschool app, a Google Play Best for Families winner in 2023. We found little beyond the award.

10. Teaching Strategies (birth to pre-K, for teachers). Not an app for children: a classroom curriculum and observation tool that won CODiE awards in 2025 and 2026. It is the only one in the list with a randomised trial. In 2026 the National Institute for Early Education Research found better teacher retention and gains on the company's own assessment, but weaker or no results on outside measures.

What the ten share

- The parent buys and sets up. The child picks from tiles; the grown-up sees a thin report.
- Safety is a seal. Several show kidSAFE badges, a seal the company applies for.
- Evidence is thin. Apart from the one trial above, we found no study showing a child learned more.

How to choose for a young child

- Check what the parent sees. You should be able to tell, in a glance, what your child did.
- Count the taps to cancel. Read the trial terms before you give a card.
- Play it with them first, for ten minutes, before they play it alone.

Where Peabody fits

Peabody (stories for kids) is free through the end of 2026, with no ads and no sign-up, and none of the apps above does that and also explains plainly what it keeps. It has won none of these awards. For the youngest, look at the library with a grown-up beside the child.

Sources

- NAPPA, Mom's Choice, Kidscreen, Webby and Google Play winner pages, read November 2026.
- Common Sense Media reviews of Lingokids, ABCmouse and PBS KIDS Games; NIEER's study of Teaching Strategies; vendor pages and store listings.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/10-award-winning-early-learning-apps-compared